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ABSTRACT

Comparative statistical analyses of publication records for the library directors of the 50 largest academic libraries in the United States revealed that: (1) total years of library experience bore no relation to publication activity; (2) the directors' publication records were generally average when compared to the field as a whole; and (3) the acquisition of advanced academic degrees, especially the library science doctorate, resulted in an increased rate of publication. Statistics for this report, which were compiled from citations in Library Literature and Library Science Abstracts/Library and Information Science Abstracts, included information gathered from several sources regarding total years of library experience and academic degrees held. Footnotes include 12 references. (Author/RAA)

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"PUBLICATION ACTIVITY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS"

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ABSTRACT:

Publication records for the library directors of the fifty largest academic libraries in the United States were compiled from citations in Library Literature and Library Science Abstracts/Library and Information Science Abstracts. Information regarding total years of library experience and academic degrees held was also determined. Comparative statistical analyses revealed that: (1) total years of library experience bore no relationship to publication activity, (2) the directors' publication records were generally only average when compared to the field as a whole, and (3) the acquisition of advanced academic degrees, especially the library science doctorate, resulted in an increased rate of publication.

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PUBLICATION ACTIVITY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS

The past decade has witnessed an increased emphasis upon mandatory research and publication by academic librarians. Two studies completed in the late 1960's revealed that few, if any, academic librarians were actually required to publish.[1] By contrast, a questionnaire survey of academic libraries holding membership in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) recently completed by the authors found that 15% of the librarians surveyed were required to publish for tenure and/or promotion.[2]

This new and growing emphasis upon research and publication affects all academic librarians, including those in director-level administrative positions. Whether through personal initiative, that of their respective institutional administrations, or both, library directors are demanding increased scholarly research and publication efforts by their professional staffs, most notably at institutions where librarians hold faculty status.[3] And because library directors play a major role in professional staff evaluation which would take into consideration research and publication activity, that evaluation would be more legitimate if the director possessed a credible publication record as well.

It appears a reasonable assumption that academic library directors would be familiar with the facets of research and publication through general experience within the academic community, professional work experience, or through their own scholarly endeavors since research, and especially publication, are thought to be positive factors in achieving advancement to major administrative positions in academic libraries.

But is this assumption born out in actuality? Have library directors contributed to a significant degree to scholarship in the field of librarianship? And if so, to what degree? Are librarians who publish more likely to secure director-level administrative positions? What factors play a role in determining the level of publication activity? This study will attempt to answer, at least in part, some of these questions.

METHODOLOGY

Of first importance was the identification of an appropriate, manageable sample group of academic library directors. A listing of the fifty largest academic libraries in the United States published in the Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information 1978 was selected as the study sample. The size, complexity, and sheer volume of research conducted at these libraries made the study of their respective directors an ideal choice for a sample. The identity of current library directors, as well as pertinent personal data such as years of professional experience and educational attainment, were obtained through several biographical sources.[4] In four instances, it was necessary to clarify the identity of a library director through a telephone inquiry. Individuals holding an "acting" director status(3) were excluded, thereby reducing the sample to 47 directors.

In order to objectively determine the publications of each director in the field of librarianship, an exhaustive examination of Library Literature and Library Science Abstracts/Library and Information Science Abstracts was undertaken. All publications, with the exception of book reviews, were recorded. It should be acknowledged that while only the field of librarianship

was examined for publications, it is probable that these individuals have published in other academic disciplines as well. Determining an objective publication record for all disciplines would be an impossible task and not relevant to the focus of this study. By limiting publication activity to the single, important field of librarianship, and then relying upon the two singularly basic indexing and abstracting services for pertinent citations, a comprehensive record for each director was compiled.

No attempt was made to differentiate between various publication mediums. Therefore, the total number of publications makes no distinction between, for example, an article published in a state library journal and a book: all publications were counted on a strictly numerical basis. Although a controversial subject, academic librarians will eventually have to come to grips with this question and formulate a weighted system to objectively recognize the overall differences in complexity inherent in various publication mediums. O'Connor and Van Orden alluded to this need, and suggested it might be pegged to the rate of acceptance for publication, at least in the case of journal articles.[5] Further investigation of this issue is needed.

FINDINGS

Categorized statistical results provided the basis for analysis of the publication records of the sample group of library directors. (Table 1). Articles of all types--state, regional,and national--predominated the publication mediums with a three-fourths (74%) total. National journal articles accounted for over one-half (57%) of all publications. Book Chapters(54), conference proceedings(16), books(13), and editor of a journal(1) rounded out

the other forms of publication activity.

Years of library experience served as another statistical breakdown. (Table 2). The year of initial appointment to a professional position was used as a base to compute total years of experience for each director, ranging from 12 to 43 years. The mean and median were nearly identical (27 and 26 years, respectively). Totals for the actual number of publications themselves ranged from zero to 36, with a mean of 7 and a median of 4 publications.

Based upon the average career span of 27 years and a mean total of 7 publications, these statistics show that the directors averaged the equivalent of one publication of some sort nearly every four years, a modest scholarly achievement. Compared to the significant finding of Watson[6] who reported that (again excluding book reviews) academic librarians overall averaged a single publication every five years, the library directors' level of publication is quite average. Closer scrutiny of the median score(4) revealed that one-half of the directors accomplished an average of a single publication every seven years, a minimal record of publication. And of that group, twelve directors (one-fourth of the entire sample) could claim but a single publication or less during their professional career.

These statistics represent a strictly numerical analysis of factors such as years of experience and overall publication record. A clearer analytical picture of these relationships is achieved through utilization of the statistical test of the coefficient of correlation "r" which measures the degree of association between two related sets of data. In the example presented, the related sets are (1) total years of library experience, and (2) total number of publications in the field of librarianship. The coefficient of correlation assumes values ranging from +1.0 to -1.0. If the two sets of data have

an r value equalling +1.0, then the sets are perfectly positively correlated; if r equals -1.0, they are perfectly negatively correlated. And if r equals zero, they are totally uncorrelated. Care must be exercised in the use of the coefficient of correlation as it does not necessarily measure an absolute relationship between the variables, but rather indicates a degree of association, still a valuable indicator.

To measure the degree of association between the two variables involved, the product-moment coefficient of correlation developed by Pearson is employed.[7] In this case, the following formula is used:

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)\ \ (n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

For this sample, n=47 (the number of library directors surveyed), x= 1261 (the total years of professional experience), and y=332 (the total number of publications).

Computing the formula based upon this data yields an r value of -.10 for the degree of association between years of experience and number of publications. This r value indicates a very small negative correlation between the two variables. Therefore, increased years of experience do not necessarily result in a greater number of publications, at least based upon this sample group of academic library directors. It should also be noted that by using the coefficient of determination, r^2, an r value of -.10 indicates that only one percent (1%) of the total variation is due to some association between the variables and their minimal association is in a negative direction. Thus, for all practical purposes, there seems to be little or no relationship between

years of experience in librarianship and the volume of publications achieved. This closely corroborates a finding of a study done by White and Momenee for individuals holding the library science doctorate, although a caveat is in order since their listings of publications were supplied by the respondents, included book reviews, and admittedly some padding.[8]

Another important point centered upon determining the relationship between academic degree and level of publication activity. (Table 3). The directors surveyed held a variety of degrees in various combinations. Directors not possessing the doctorate, but rather academic degrees ranging from a single bachelors degree up to a double masters degree (typically, the masters in library science plus a cognate subject field), averaged .22 publications per year, or the equivalent of a publication every four and one-half years. Those directors possessing at least a doctorate in a field other than library science averaged .29 publications per year, while those holding at least the library science doctorate achieved a level of .38 publications per year. It is interesting to note that directors holding the doctorate, regardless of the area of specialization, published with greater frequency after the receipt of the doctorate than before (from an average of .09 to .33 publications per year for non-library science doctorates, and .14 to .56 per year for library science doctorates). However, the publication record of directors holding the library science doctorate (.56 publications per year following receipt of the degree) compared poorly with the findings of White and Momenee who reported an average of .97 publications per year for individuals in all types of positions following receipt of the library science doctorate.[9]

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that the directors of the fifty largest

academic libraries in the United States, where a marked emphasis upon research and publication would be expected, possess surprisingly mediocre publication records. There is apparently no relationship between average years of professional experience and publication activity, although earning advanced degrees, particularly the library science doctorate, does increase the likelihood that a director will have published in librarianship.

It can be argued to a point that administrative duties absorb so much of a director's time and energy that research or publication are simply not possible.[10] Nevertheless, it must be remembered that library directors were not always library directors. Opportunities for the scholarly study of librarianship, granting that an interest exists, would seemingly have presented themselves throughout their professional careers. In general, however, their respective publication records belie the important administrative positions they now hold.

Librarianship has changed in a quantum fashion over the careers of many of these directors. While a credible publication record may have been an issue of lesser importance in an individual's advancement in the past, it will undoubtedly gain in importance over the years ahead.

N = 47

TABLE 1.

PUBLICATIONS OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS
BY TYPE OF MEDIUM

Category	Number
Books	13
Articles:	
State	56
Regional	4
National	188
Chapter in a Book	54
Editor of a journal issue	1
Conference Proceedings	16
Total	332

N = 47

TABLE 2.

LIBRARY DIRECTORS: PUBLICATION FREQUENCY
AND YEARS OF LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

Category	Mean	Median	Range
Total number of publications: (N= 331)	7	4	0 - 36
Total years of library experience: (N= 1261)	27	26	12 - 43

N = 47

TABLE 3.

PUBLICATION FREQUENCY OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS BY HIGHEST ACADEMIC DEGREE

Category	Average Number of Publications Per Year	Average Number of Publications Per Year Prior to Doctorate	Average Number of Publications Per Year Since Receipt of Doctorate
Non-Doctorate (N=29) (BSLS,MLS, MA etc.)	.22	NA	NA
Doctorate: Non-Library Science (N= 8)	.29	.09	.33
Doctorate: Library Science (N= 10)	.38	.14	.56

FOOTNOTES

1. William Jesse and A.E. Mitchell, "Professional Staff Opportunities for Study and Research," College & Research Libraries 29(1968): 87-100; and W. Porter Kellam and Dale L. Barker, "Activities and Opportunities of University Librarians for Full Participation in the Educational Enterprise," College & Research Libraries 29(1968): 197-199.

2. Ronald Rayman and Frank Wm. Goudy, "Research and Publication Requirements in University Libraries," College & Research Libraries 41(1980), 47.

3. Ibid, 45-47.

4. The sources used were Who's Who in America 1978-1979 (40th ed.); Lee Ash, ed., Biographical Directory of Librarians in the United States and Canada 5th ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1970); references in Library Literature; and the American Library Directory 1978 (31st ed.).

5. Daniel O'Connor and Phyllis Van Orden, "Getting Into Print," College & Research Libraries 39(1978); 391.

6. Paula De Simone Watson, "Publication Activity Among Academic Librarians," College & Research Libraries 38(1977): 381-382.

7. Donald R. Byrkit, Elements of Statistics (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972), p.232.

8. Herbert S. White and Karen Momenee, "Impact of the Increase in Library Doctorates," College & Research Libraries 39(1978): 211-212.

9. Ibid., p.213.

10. These duties are well-discussed in Paul Metz, "The Role of the Academic Library Director," Journal of Academic Librarianship 5(1979): 148-152.